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## **Implicit homophobic argument structure: Equal-marriage discourse in the *Moral Maze*<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyses the linguistic and discursive elements which contribute to the production of implicit homophobia. Explicit homophobia has been well documented and strategies for countering discriminatory language have been developed (Baker, 2014; Leap, 2012). However, our interest here is in documenting implicit homophobia, where homophobic beliefs are only hinted at, are disassociated from the speaker, or are embedded within discursive and argument structures.

We decided to analyse the debate in the media around the introduction of equal or same-sex marriage legislation in the UK. We focused our analysis on a series of radio programmes on BBC Radio 4, *The Moral Maze*, (2011-12) where the issue of same-sex marriage was debated with a team of panelists and invited guests from a range of different organisations. Different perspectives on same sex marriage were discussed, in a seemingly objective and dispassionate way, where the interactants distanced themselves from homophobic beliefs and yet, implicitly subscribed to implicit homophobia. We used an analysis drawing on argumentation structure (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012) and through focusing on stance, recontextualisation, imaginaries, and metaphor, we developed an analysis which made the way that implicit homophobia works more visible. In this way, we hope to foreground implicit homophobia, and develop a linguistic and discursive 'toolkit' which will enable it to be challenged and countered.

**Keywords:** homophobia; argumentation; same-sex marriage; imaginaries; metaphor; stance; recontextualisation

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Jodie Clark and Liz Morrish for their input in the early stages of this research project.

<sup>2</sup> The Discourses of Marriage Research group was set up in 2012 to investigate the frameworks within which the legislation around same-sex marriage were discussed, at a time when legislation was passing through the UK Parliament.

## 1. Introduction:<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this paper is to map out at a discourse level what implicit homophobia consists of. Explicit homophobia, just like explicit sexism or racism, is relatively easy to identify, though still difficult to combat (Butler, 1997; Mills, 2008). However, *implicit* homophobia (referred to as 'covert' homophobia in Peterson, 2011), where speakers hint at, presuppose or convey homophobic beliefs whilst also claiming that they are not homophobic, is much more difficult to identify. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to provide a linguistic, discourse-level toolkit for identifying implicit homophobia. Below, we consider the debates about the legislation on equal marriage that have taken place in the UK; as a result, the homophobic beliefs that we identify here are specific to that context. We hope, however, that this discussion will also provide a framework for future analyses of implicit homophobia in other contexts and enable others to identify homophobia in its less obvious forms. This framework is not exhaustive; it is an illustration of what can be uncovered when a focus on linguistic elements is integrated with a focus on the discourse level.

The linguistic elements we refer to here include features such as nouns, passivisation, tense, deixis, and so on. It will be shown, below, that these features are a realisation of stances taken in relation to same-sex marriage in our data. In much critical discourse analysis (CDA) work, it has been assumed that this should be the focus of analysis (Fairclough, 1989; Jeffries, 2010). However, more recent CDA work has insisted that we focus instead on elements at a higher discourse level, above the level of the sentence and at the level of argument structure (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). We argue that it is only through integrating linguistic with discourse level elements that we are able to adequately analyse texts. We examine a range of discourse level elements in this article, namely stance, metaphor, recontextualisation and imaginaries, but these need not be the *only* things that are focused on in this kind of analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> We worked collaboratively on the writing of this project by using the documents facility on Google drive. This enabled us to collaboratively revise one document. We recommend this system for others working on group projects.

Salient features are dependent on the text analysed and the specific debates that are taking place at the moment of writing; imaginaries are important here, for example, because of the specific argument about what would happen if same-sex marriage was legalised, a situation which was not a reality at the time of the data collection.

The principal method of analysis used in this investigation is that of a modified form of CDA, a form of linguistic analysis which is openly political about its aims. Through analysing linguistic features in a range of texts, CDA theorists expose the ideological workings of these texts in order to make readers aware of the way that texts co-opt them or persuade them. The main focus of CDA theorists is text-based (mainly newspaper texts and advertisements), although recently there has been a move to analyse spoken discourse and to use corpus analysis (Baker, 2008: 2014). The Discourses of Marriage Research Group aims to raise awareness of homophobia, to provide a means for identifying it, to facilitate increased discussion and activism, and to provide more productive terms within which to discuss it (cf. Burton, 1982). By making participants in these debates aware of the implicitly homophobic nature of their statements, it may be possible to shift the terms of the debate. Our aim is therefore political, and constitutes a form of action research<sup>4</sup>.

Below, we first discuss the equal marriage debate and the stages of its legislation. We then go on to describe the data, which consists of transcripts<sup>5</sup> of three programmes on BBC Radio 4's *Moral Maze* which, in 2011-12, focused on the same-sex marriage debate. We then discuss research on language and homophobia, before moving to a discussion of the integrated linguistic and discourse level elements of our analysis. The elements which we focus on, in order to describe implicit homophobia, are recontextualisation, stance, imaginaries and metaphor; together, in the context of the *Moral Maze* debates, these make up the argumentation

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<sup>4</sup> Action or standpoint research is politically motivated research which aims to bring about change in the world (c.f. Burr, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> These were produced using ordinary orthographic transcription conventions, as we were not concerned with capturing the minutiae of interaction or structural organisation of talk.

structure. By 'argumentation structure', we mean the complex ways in which a text tries to persuade the reader of a particular argument or position. This is understood by Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 36) as 'a social and rational activity of attempting to justify or refute a certain claim, and aiming to persuade an interlocutor (a reasonable critic) of the acceptability (or unacceptability) of a claim', achieved dialogically through the presentation of rational and logical reasoning. Thus, in this article, we uncover the arguments used in the *Moral Maze* which we consider to be implicitly homophobic.

Our overall aim is to describe the way that, within this debate on the *Moral Maze*, the arguments about equal marriage are framed within a religious and biologicistic/'natural' framework which poses heterosexual marriage as the norm and which implicitly categorises same-sex relationships as abnormal and associated with other stigmatised, non-heteronormative sexualities (such as polyamory, incest and polygamy). In order to set out a framework for talking about equal marriage in positive terms, and not framed solely by religious discourse with its focus on sin, compliance, tradition and aberration, we find that there is a need to frame the discussion of same-sex marriage in terms of human rights or sexual freedoms. In this way, we hope to be able to map out alternative conceptions of equal marriage as well as illustrating the arguments against it.

## **2. The marriage equality debate in the UK**

Same-sex couples were unable to have a legally-recognised union in the UK until 2005, when 'civil partnerships' were introduced by the Labour government. This was brought in as a separate legal union to marriage, (which remained the exclusive right of heterosexual couples)<sup>6</sup>. In September 2011, Liberal Democrat MP Lynne Featherstone, then the Under Secretary for Equalities, announced that a government consultation into same-sex marriage would be launched in March 2012, consisting of a survey which was available for all citizens to complete.

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<sup>6</sup> Heterosexual couples are not currently able to choose to have a civil partnership.

The survey asked for the citizens of England and Wales' views on whether same-sex couples should be able to have a civil *marriage* rather than a civil *partnership*, and how this should be implemented. In December 2012, it was announced that 53% of the 228,000 responses agreed that same-sex couples should be able to have a civil marriage ceremony (HM Government 2012). One month later, Maria Miller, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Women and Equalities, introduced the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Bill to Parliament. The Bill proposed the extension of civil marriages to same-sex couples, but prevented religious unions for same-sex couples or civil partnerships for heterosexual couples. After lengthy debate in the House of Commons, the Bill was passed by Members of Parliament with 366 votes in favour, and 161 votes against. After moving to the House of Lords, as is British constitutional procedure, the Bill was again debated and passed back to Parliament before being written into law by the Queen in July 2013. The Act came into effect in March 2014.

Throughout this twenty-two month process, the British media broadcast and published debates about whether same-sex couples should be allowed to marry. Political parties on the left, such as the Green Party, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and some Conservative party members – including the Prime Minister, David Cameron – were all broadly in favour, as were popular newspapers such as *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*<sup>7</sup>. Equally influential newspapers such as the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Sunday Times* were against it, along with some members of the Conservative party, but most political parties in opposition were minority parties – including the far-right *British National Party* and the *United Kingdom Independent Party*. A number of media outlets gave high-profile religious leaders a platform to express their opposition to the plans; this included the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, who said in the *Daily Mail* that 'marriage will only remain the bedrock of a society if it is between a man and a woman' (Carey, 2012) and the country's most senior

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<sup>7</sup> These claims are based on preliminary findings from our analysis of a corpus of UK newspaper articles focusing on same-sex marriage.

Catholic, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, who wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that the government were indulging in 'madness' and same-sex marriage would be a 'grotesque subversion' (O'Brien, 2012).

The debate continued throughout the entire legislative process and, unusually, was considered three times by the *Moral Maze*, a weekly current affairs debate show on BBC Radio 4. In the analysis which follows, the discussions taking place in these broadcasts are considered in relation to how discourses of homophobia and equality are constructed and negotiated by the participants. Specifically, the use of recontextualisation, stance, imaginaries and metaphor is investigated, in terms of how they enable speakers in the *Moral Maze*, through discussing heterosexual and homosexual relations within the context of religion, to take implicitly homophobic stances towards or against same-sex marriage whilst posing themselves as reasonable, logical and *not* homophobic.

### **3. The *Moral Maze***

The *Moral Maze* is a weekly forty-five minute radio programme, produced by the BBC since 1990 and hosted by broadcaster Michael Buerk on Radio 4. Each week, Buerk introduces a particular topic which is to be discussed by four members of a panel through the interrogation of a selection of four 'witnesses'. The three programmes under scrutiny here are *The Moral Worth of Marriage* (first broadcast 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011, total of 8,470 words, henceforth *MM0*), *Gay Marriage*<sup>8</sup> (14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, 8,890 words, henceforth *MM1*) and *The Moral Virtue of Marriage* (6<sup>th</sup> February 2013, 8,522 words, henceforth *MM2*)<sup>9</sup>. It is extremely irregular for the *Moral Maze* to revisit a topic, and so three separate broadcasts on this theme signifies its social significance

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<sup>8</sup> The popular media, including the BBC, routinely referred to the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Bill as 'Gay Marriage'. In this paper, we refer to it instead as 'same-sex marriage' to allow for the fact that not all people in same-sex relationships necessarily identify as *gay*.

<sup>9</sup> Transcripts of each broadcast were created by the Discourses of Marriage Research Group and are available via our blog at: <http://discoursesofmarriage.blogspot.co.uk/2014/03/our-transcriptions-of-moral-maze.html>.

and newsworthiness.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the very fact that the debate was had serves to reinforce the ‘otherness’ of same-sex marriage; in itself, this arguably helps to perpetuate homophobia.<sup>11</sup>

The structure of the *Moral Maze* is consistent from week to week; there is a panel, made up of regular social commentators (including journalists, religious or business leaders, academics and politicians) and a selection of ‘witnesses’ who are invited because of their relevant specialist experience or knowledge. In the course of the debates on same-sex marriage that make up our data, several of the panellists - Melanie Phillips (who works for the right-wing *Daily Mail* newspaper), ex-Conservative MP Michael Portillo and Catholic writer Clifford Longley - appear in two broadcasts. Kenan Malik, a science historian and neurobiologist, appears in all three. The witnesses are comprised predominantly of religious leaders and political campaigners, each being interviewed, after being introduced by Buerk and making an opening statement. Buerk then selects two of the panel members to interview the witness individually.

The witness is always the last person to take the floor before their segment ends, and they tend to be given an equal amount of floor time - between eight to ten minutes - although this does vary a little depending on the flow of discussion. Across the three *Moral Maze* transcripts considered in this article, there are five witnesses and four panel members who broadly support same-sex marriage, with six witnesses and three panel members opposed to it. Figure 1 shows the structure of each of the recordings, detailing which witnesses were interviewed by which panel members. The individuals highlighted in grey are in favour of same-sex marriage, whereas those in white took stances against it. The panel members selected to interview each witness are generally on opposite sides of the debate; only one witness is interviewed by a panel member who shares their stance. Whilst some of the panel members in the *Moral Maze* debates did not take explicit stances on same-sex marriage (see below), it was

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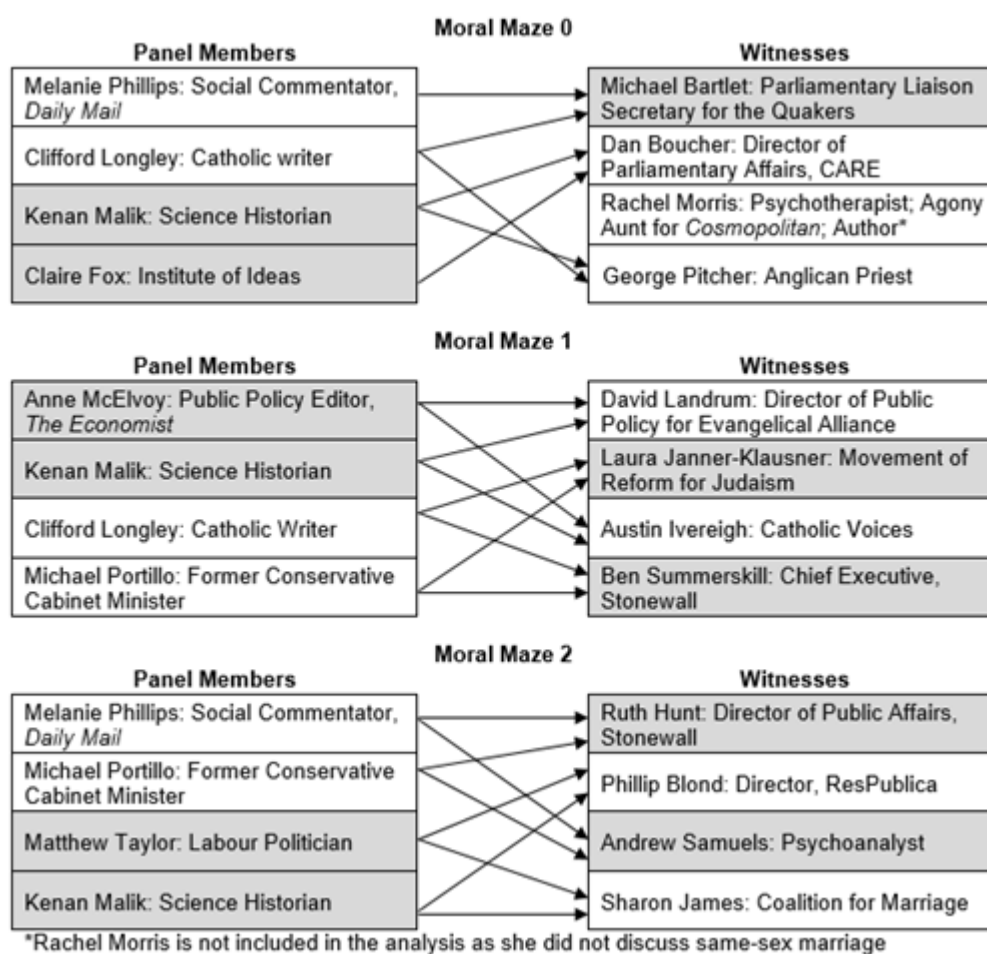
<sup>10</sup> MM0 is not analysed in as much detail as the later two programmes as it was largely concerned with the state of heterosexual marriage in the light of the upcoming legislation on same-sex marriage. We do, however, refer to this programme when it is of contextual relevance.

<sup>11</sup> Our thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this observation.



clear that none of them were completely neutral on the issue. For example, despite claims that ‘I am quite prepared to be persuaded’, Clifford Longley, speaking as a Catholic writer, states that he is ‘not persuaded yet’, aligning him with those in opposition to same-sex marriage. There is one other participant, Rachel Morris, who does not take an explicit stance on same-sex marriage. However, her contributions are not considered in this study because she does not discuss same-sex marriage at all.

Figure 1: Mapping the *Moral Maze*



Of particular significance to the current study is what Fairclough and Fairclough (2012: 83) refer to as *recontextualisation*. This is the process whereby discourses from one context are reappropriated or ‘colonised’ in another, such as economic discourses like Marxism being taken and used within political or business fields, or management discourse being used within the

context of universities. When speakers build arguments they both draw on existing discourses from other contexts and gradually create their own discourses that come to be associated with their argument (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 84). The process of recontextualisation is important to consider when analysing the construction of a line of argumentation - such as justifying either a pro- or anti- same-sex marriage stance - as, by drawing on recognisable discourses from contexts such as the law courts or scientific research, speakers may index (point to) an authoritative identity or construct an objective stance .

The debates in the *Moral Maze* are legitimised through the recontextualisation of the social institution of law; the way that the programme is structured colonises discursive structures more typically associated with legal contexts. The format of the show may be compared with the format of a UK Crown Court, with Buerk serving as the judge (an impartial, yet controlling, persona) and the panel members serving as barristers who ask questions of the witnesses (a loaded term) who are called to testify. According to Coulthard and Johnson (2007:96), there are several fixed elements of a Crown Court trial, including the indictment ('the offence(s) with which the trial is concerned being read out to the court'), the opening address, evidence from prosecution and defence lawyers, the closing summing-up and judgement. In the *Moral Maze*, Buerk begins each broadcast with an overview of the topic at hand, representative of the indictment and a judge's opening address. He then introduces each of the panel members in turn, allowing them a brief opening statement in much the same way that both prosecution and defence barristers are given the floor to summarise their position. Witnesses are then called, albeit by the host rather than the panel members themselves, and are (cross-)examined by two panel members.

The recontextualisation of legal discourse in the *Moral Maze* allows the 'witnesses' to be seen as legitimate and authorised to speak on the topic of discussion. Coulthard and Johnson note that 'Not all witnesses are equal', claiming that, in court cases, the vast majority of witnesses will be 'lay people', with expert witnesses called upon only when necessary

(2007:112). However, in the case of the *Moral Maze*, all of the witnesses are arguably experts in their respective fields. What is questionable is whether their expert status as, for example, religious leaders, campaigners or psychoanalysts, actually qualifies them as ‘experts’ on marriage law or issues of equality around sexual identity. Their role as witnesses gives them a presumed authority, yet their views on marriage are necessarily biased. This fuels the debate, of course, but the reasons for them being selected as expert witnesses seem arbitrary or even partisan. As the data will show, for example, the fact that historians on religion and religious leaders have been chosen as experts leads to the debate being skewed towards the framing of marriage in terms of historical and religious discourse; this is implicitly homophobic because same-sex marriage is discussed as an aberration in this context. Similarly, we might ask why there are no witnesses who specifically identify as atheist, whilst Rabbis, Quakers, Catholics and Anglicans *are* asked to contribute. There is also no commentator who happens to be gay but is not specifically involved in LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) rights activism. We feel that the casting of the broadcast within such a religious and historical framework ensures that the discussion is led in a particular way; the focus tends towards religion rather than LGBT activism or human rights.

In terms of the recontextualisation of legal proceedings, the host, Michael Buerk, is presented as an impartial judge, and he therefore gives each witness a similar amount of time to speak. However, when he introduces the the topic of discussion in the opening segment of each *Moral Maze* debate, he does tend to highlight the arguments against same-sex marriage rather than those for it. It is the host’s remit to introduce each panelist and witness, and also to end the questioning of one panel member and introduce another; in this sense, he has control of the floor at all times. Towards the end of the broadcast, each panel member is invited to comment on what they have heard, parallel to the closing speeches afforded to defence and prosecution barristers in court (although, unlike the monologue of the courtroom, there is some discussion between panel members). The host always gets the final word. He may give an extremely brief

summary, similar to a condensed version of a judge's summing-up, before ending the broadcast. Whilst there is no jury as such in the *Moral Maze*, it is arguable that the radio listeners go beyond being passive audience members; they are encouraged to evaluate the arguments of the panel and the witnesses in order to 'sentence' the issue at hand on an individual level.

Our analysis of the three *Moral Maze* broadcasts considers this recontextualisation of the law courts in the light of the arguments that are presented in relation to same-sex marriage. We consider the linguistic strategies underlying these arguments and specifically focus on those which allow speakers to position same-sex relationships as unequal to heteronormative ones. In order to identify such implicitly homophobic discourse, we consider the ways in which speakers draw on these heteronormative ideologies, an issue discussed below with reference to research in language and sexuality.

#### **4. Language and homophobic discourse**

As will be shown below, in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts analysed in this article, the speakers who are against same-sex marriage largely draw on heteronormative discourses to justify their stance. Heteronormative discourses are those which position heterosexuality as both natural and normal (Motschenbacher, 2011: 152) and, in turn, render 'all other forms of human sexual expression pathological, deviant, invisible, unintelligible, or written out of existence' (Yep, 2002: 167). Heteronormativity is, then, a subtle cultural system which serves to maintain a gender and sexual order which is driven by 'opposite-sex' attraction; through this system, homophobic discourses are enabled. Homophobia may be defined as an irrational hatred or fear directed against same-sex identities, desires and practices (Baker and Ellece, 2011: 56), and there has recently been increasing interest in the language of homophobic

discourse within the field of language and sexuality (Leap, 2012: 567).<sup>12</sup> As Morrish notes, homophobic language involves hate speech, the use of which can have negative outcomes ranging from 'an incitement to vote for a proposition, or to murder or abuse the individual suspected of being gay' (2010: 325). Such definitions tend to focus on overt expressions of hatred, however; as Peterson (2011: 748) argues, homophobia works in often complex ways, such as by negatively evaluating queer relationships in a covert way via the questioning of their validity. In this sense, as we have argued already, some homophobia is implicit - it is not always realised in the form of hate speech.

It is important to consider homophobic discourse in terms of its covert realisation because, as Brickell (2001: 214) has argued, overtly homophobic language which directly positions LGB people as inferior is now largely 'frowned upon' in Western culture. In this article, then, we focus on the linguistic strategies which are used to draw upon heteronormative ideologies which, in turn, allow speakers to position same-sex relationships as unequal to heterosexual ones whilst presenting themselves as non-homophobic. As Morrish (2010) argues, no linguistic features are intrinsically homophobic; it is rather the use of particular terms and argument structures in a given context which may lead to an overarching message of homophobia. As such, a text – or its authors - cannot be classified as homophobic based solely on linguistic feature-spotting but, instead, 'shared properties of homophobic texts' will be found at the discourse level (Morrish, 2010: 328). In this sense, homophobia is best seen as occasioned by an amalgamation of discursive and stylistic strategies, rather than as being embedded within a text (Leap, 2004).

Whilst studies of *explicit* homophobia may focus, for example, on the use of homophobic epithets such as 'fag' (Pascoe, 2005) or on the way 'gay' can be used to stigmatise

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<sup>12</sup> Following the presentation of this research at the BAAL Gender and Language Special Interest Group conference at Middlesex University, May 2014, the question was raised about whether homophobia is itself part of a larger conservative discourse. In our future work, we may well examine the way that homophobia itself serves a purpose, not only in itself to establish heteronormativity and exclude homosexuals, but also to assert conservative and potentially authoritarian belief in the status quo.

heterosexual males who are perceived as insufficiently 'masculine' (Cameron, 1997), research investigating how homophobia is *hidden* within texts relies on layered analysis of texts; from close linguistic analysis to an analysis of broader discursive and socio-historical levels.

Peterson's (2010) research is an example of this; he examines how institutional homophobia is instantiated in texts on the website of a Christian organisation. He focuses on stylistic choices and discursive strategies to uncover how lexical choices, modality, agency, genre appropriation and semantic relationships are used to reinforce supposedly objective evaluations that position gay people as deviant. Similarly, Provencher's (2010) study of homophobic language in France focuses on discursive strategies in relation to speaker/listener constructs and social semiotics. He finds that the discreditation of an openly gay mayor because of his sexuality is possible in France, due to broadly accepted notions of French citizenship and the underlying assumptions about who belongs to the collective social unit (e.g. normative members of society). In the analysis which follows, we take a similar 'layered analysis' approach to uncover the implicit homophobic discourse underlying individuals' stances against marriage equality.

Of particular concern here, of course, is political discourse and debate concerning rights for same-sex couples. In Britain today, the use of overtly homophobic or sexist language by those in politics and in the public eye is deemed unacceptable. This was demonstrated in September 2013, when Member of the European Parliament Godfrey Bloom was reprimanded for joking that women in parliament were 'sluts' (Holehouse and Deacon, 2013). Those individuals opposing legal changes that give LGB people more rights must therefore be careful with their use of language. The study of speeches by politicians and public figures about the equality of gay people is more likely to bring to light examples of *implicit* rather than *explicit* homophobia, then. An example comes from BurrIDGE (2004), who analysed transcripts from the House of Lords during debates surrounding the repeal of Section 28, a law passed in 1998 to prevent teachers from 'promoting' same-sex relationships to children. BurrIDGE shows that those opposed to the repeal of this law did not tend to make overtly homophobic comments, finding

instead that 'the rationale for discrimination [was] located in something external to a speaker's attitude to homosexuality' (Burridge, 2004:328). One particular issue repeated in Burridge's data was the consideration of the rights of children, which framed anti-repeal comments in terms of social welfare, as opposed to prejudice against gay people. As will be shown later, this link between homosexuality and child welfare is reiterated in the *Moral Maze* data, in the repeated use of the heteronormative argument that marriage is intrinsically linked to procreation and successful child rearing. Homosexuality is thus characterised as endangering children.<sup>13</sup>

Baker (2004) also provides a useful analysis of the language used in debates in the House of Lords between 1998 and 2000, focusing on proposals to lower the age of consent for gay men from 18 to 16. Baker's analysis centres on how discourses of homosexuality are constructed by participants through the investigation of frequent lexical items used by opposing sides. He locates a range of implicit homophobic arguments. Those against the proposal to lower the age of consent for gay men drew on discourses of danger, criminality and abnormality. A discourse of 'danger and ruin' was characterised by the belief that anal sex is dangerous (Baker, 2004: 97), another example was that the reforms represented the 'thin end of the wedge', a metaphor with similar connotations to the 'slippery slope', which also features in the *Moral Maze* data below. Baker shows how the use of phrases like *gross indecency* and *commit* imply criminal behaviour, and anal intercourse is thus positioned as aberrant in relation to 'normal intercourse' (2004: 100). Baker argues that the anti-reformers are able to present implicit homophobic arguments by only talking about homosexual *acts*, not gay *people*, thereby drawing a distinction between behaviour and identity. This disassociation allows the anti-reformers to justify their opposition in that, if homosexuality is defined as an act, and the prototypical act of homosexuality is anal sex, which is dangerous and criminal, then the age of

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<sup>13</sup> One of the readers of this paper noted that the assertion that equal marriage endangers children is part of a wider assertion that homosexuality in itself is dangerous to children.

consent for anal sex should not be lowered.<sup>14</sup> In an earlier study, Morrish (1997) analyses newspaper reports of the parliamentary vote on the age of consent for gay men. She found that whilst members of 'the gay community' argued from the stance of human rights, right-wing commentators framed the debate in terms of 'prurient judgements about sexual behaviour' (1997: 341). Gay sex was also described as 'falling short of God's ideal' by a Church of England priest (*ibid.*) This resonates with the findings of Baker's (2004) study, in that anti-reformers focus on sexual behaviour rather than sexual identity.

Baker also shows that those in favour of reform have framed the debate in terms of equality and tolerance, a finding which is reflected in the work of Baunach (2011). In relation to debates over same-sex marriage taking place in the USA, Baunach notes that the 'media frame' of morality (as used predominantly by those who are anti-same-sex marriage) was contrasted with the equality/tolerance media frame (characteristic of those who were pro-same-sex marriage). Rather than focussing on whether an argument is homophobic or not, Baunach's analysis reveals that those in favour of same-sex marriage may position the debate as a 'civil rights or acceptance issue' (Baunach, 2011: 348-9). In doing so, they are able to move the debate on from 'right or wrong' questions and towards 'equality' questions.

An important issue in this area of research, however, is the question of visibility: who actually contributes to debates about gay rights in the mainstream media? Moscovitz (2010) highlights this question in her analysis of a corpus of US news bulletins, documenting who was given airtime to talk about/for same-sex marriage. Moscovitz found that 'gays and lesbians were not often given a chance to speak in news reports' (2010: 34), meaning that those who were to be directly affected by any changes in legislation were not part of the decision-making process in prime-time public domain. Given the present study, Moscovitz's finding is interesting,

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<sup>14</sup> In an October 2013 BBC 2 programme, *Out There*, on the legislation on homosexuality throughout the world, Stephen Fry drew attention to the fact that anti-gay campaigners tend to focus on anal sex obsessively, even though he argues that not all gay men engage in it. See also Baker (2014) for discussions of the representation of homosexuality.



because although some contributors in our data self-identify as married or unmarried by choice, none of the participants explicitly identify as gay (or in same-sex relationships) during the radio broadcasts. Furthermore, Moscovitz (2010:27) noted that when covering 'gay issues... gay and lesbian people are typically pitted against opposing 'official' sources from legal, medical, religious and political authorities'. In the *Moral Maze* data, below, speakers were not asked to identify themselves in terms of their sexual orientation, although (in line with Moscovitz' argument) we do see 'experts' from the fields of religion and politics dominating the discussion. In the three *Moral Maze* transcripts (as shown in Figure 1), seven out of a total of twenty participants are primarily labelled as representing a religious/religion-based institution, and five are introduced as being from a political/campaigning background.

In order to reveal implicitly homophobic stances in broadcasts of the *Moral Maze*, we follow the approaches outlined in this section by identifying the intertextual clues, references and discursive strategies which underpin speakers' opposition to same-sex marriage. Provencher (2010: 291) asks how these clues or references may lead to the interpretation of a message as 'invested with homophobic intent'. Whilst we do not feel it is possible to identify the 'intent' of speakers, through the analysis of stances taken, metaphors employed and imaginaries invoked in the participants' speech, we map out more clearly the workings of implicit homophobic discourse.

## **5. Analysis**

In this section, we examine recontextualisation, stance taking, imaginaries and metaphors in turn. The elements chosen for analysis emerged from a combination of initial readings of the transcripts, and influence from Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) work on recontextualisation and imaginaries, and thus constituted a combination of inductive and deductive approaches. We begin, below, by briefly examining which discourses are being recontextualised, in order to analyse the argumentation strategies and stances which are being

indexed when speakers make their claims. For example, if a speaker draws on scientific or religious discourse during a *Moral Maze* discussion, we describe the ways that they do this in order to make a successful claim and mark out their own position as logical and authoritative. We then move on to consider patterns of stance-taking and the use of imaginaries and metaphors in constructing arguments which produce implicit homophobia.

#### **a. Recontextualisation**

We discussed above the way that the format of the *Moral Maze* seemed to have a judicial structure. In addition, the lexical and syntactic choices of the panel members also reflect this judicial framing. For example, one witness makes direct reference to a particular law - 'it's actually a right laid out in the 1989 Declaration of Rights for the Child' (*MM2*) – to support their arguments. Additionally, in *MM1* we see discourse prosody, with repeated structures such as 'would you accept that [+proposition]', 'so, you do agree that [+proposition]', and 'can you confirm that [+proposition]', all of which are reminiscent of legal questioning (*cf.* Tiersma 1999: 164) and all of which are used only by panel members. This particular grammatical structure also relates to how panellists use stance attribution (discussed in detail below).

Further parallels between the role of a Crown Court Judge and the *Moral Maze* include the host's rejection of long statements by panel members when they are questioning a witness, similar to the way a judge rules. For example, the host interrupts panel member Melanie Phillips in *MM2* to ask 'this is a question, is it Melanie?', cutting into what was becoming a monologue in which she expressed her own views. Although the use of a tag question may mitigate the impact of the face threatening act<sup>15</sup> performed by Buerk in this example, Melanie Phillips has to justify her position in order to continue. This process is similar to court proceedings and illustrates the power differentials between the panellists and the host.<sup>16</sup> Beurk also controls the input of panel

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<sup>15</sup> A face threatening act, for Brown and Levinson (1987), is a challenge to a person's need to be both liked and not imposed upon.

<sup>16</sup> The issue of face saving and face threat is of importance here, because in this type of debate, a strong imperative is bolstering your claim to impartiality and authoritativeness (see Watts, 2003 on face and face

members by noting the length of time for discussion they have left and by rejecting extended turns for witnesses.

However, recontextualisation in the *Moral Maze* data goes beyond legal discourse.<sup>17</sup> There is also recontextualisation of terms associated with religion, in particular Christianity. Religion is mentioned to varying degrees as one of the key issues surrounding (opposition to) same-sex marriage, but the discussion of religious issues is not in and of itself evidence of recontextualisation. There are some instances, however, where religious terminology and imagery are appropriated into the discourse without overt reference to any religious element of marriage, such as:

(1) ...we continually evolve, which is why I believe we've survived for so long because if we'd stayed where we were we'd still be in the desert very thirsty, *MM1 LJK*

(2) I talk about marriage being there to sanctify a relationship, *MM1 LJK*

(3) That was nice to have a convert, isn't it?, *MM1 MB*

(4) And the other nine percent can go to hell, can they?, *MM2 MiPo*

(5) In other words, it's a three part bond: mother, father, children, *MM2 MePh*

(6) Can I mention the word sacred union of two people who come together in order to procreate children? *MM2*

Mentions of Jews in the desert (1), going to hell (4) and a three part bond (5) - linking to the notion of a Holy Trinity - are examples of the recontextualisation of religious themes in these broadcasts. Furthermore, we can see lexical items with religious connotations, such as sanctify (2), convert (3), and sacred (6) occurring in *MM1* and *MM2*. These examples come from different speakers including those taking stances both for (Janner-Klausner) and against (Portillo and Philips) same-sex marriage. Thus, although to a much smaller extent than the

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threat).

<sup>17</sup> In our next project, the Discourses of Marriage Research Group are investigating whether the patterns observed in the *Moral Maze* are particular to this type of debate programme or also found in, for example, newspaper reports on same-sex marriage. We are examining a corpus of newspaper reports published leading up to the same-sex marriage legislation.

recontextualisation of the field of law, there is still arguably a link to religious discourse used to legitimise the debates at hand and these mentions of religion necessarily frame the debate in religious terms. The importance of this link is reinforced when the relative frequency of religious terms in the *Moral Maze* transcripts are compared to the British National Corpus (BNC). For example, 'religious', 'church', 'bless', 'sacramental' and 'sanctify' all appear with comparatively low statistical frequency, occurring more often in the *Moral Maze* transcripts than would be expected in general British English conversation.

Finally, scientific lexis is drawn on in the debate, predominantly to support the arguments of those opposed to same-sex marriage. Marriage is referred to as 'a natural institution' seven times across *MM1* and *MM2*, whilst the church is characterised as a living being (7). This construction of the church and marriage as somehow organic links to the claim that marriage has its own DNA (discussed in detail below). In contrast, human relationships are reduced to statistics (examples 8, 9 and 12), meaning that the debate is both quantified and dehumanised.

- (7) But, the church is an organic thing, the church is a *body*..., *MM1*
- (8) Well ninety-one percent of gay people say they believe in marriage, *MM2*
- (9) ...the outcomes for married people and their children tend to be statistically better,  
*MM0*
- (10) Natural parents in a married household, *MM2*
- (11) ...a one in two chance of being without one of their natural parents, *MM2*
- (12) It's the condition which links generation of children to their biological parents, *MM2*
- (13) It's always better for the children of biological parents to stay with their biological parents, *MM2*
- (14) The reason we exclude some of those marriages is for a biological reason and marriage is based on biology, *MM2*
- (15) There are some inequalities that are down to biology, *MM2*
- (16) Can you confirm that one man cannot impregnate another man..., *MM2*

(17) ...a situation where people have a natural desire to live together in a marriage but happen to be gay, *MM2*

The word 'natural' is used interchangeably with the term 'biological' when referring to parents (examples 10-13). By definition, 'biological parents' must refer to the two human beings who contributed genetic material for the creation of a child, yet there is no such clear-cut definition for the term 'natural parents'. By using the two terms interchangeably, same-sex parents, who currently cannot both contribute genetically to their child/children (see example 16), are eliminated from the scope of both 'biological' and 'natural' parents. The logical parallel to this, though not stated explicitly, is that same-sex parents must therefore be 'unnatural' as they cannot fulfil this biological criterion. This conceptualisation of parenthood supports the argument that those opposing same-sex marriage draw upon heteronormative discourses to support their position.

Invoking the concept of nature when discussing the legal rights of gay people is not unique to this dataset; Edwards (2007: 249) summarises van Gend's (2004: 1) argument that 'Nature does not include same-sex relationships in its design and no biological imperative therefore exists for sex between women or between men'. Furthermore, in the *Moral Maze* data, these biological differences are explicitly stated as a cause of inequality between gay and straight couples (examples 14-15), thus rejecting arguments about sexuality-based discrimination by positioning it as scientifically prescribed (see Edwards 2007 for an extended discussion of the links between marriage and biology in same-sex marriage debates). However, it is important to note that the link between nature and marriage is not always made in support of those opposing same-sex marriage. Example 17 illustrates that the term can also be used in order to legitimise same-sex relationships.

Overwhelmingly, the most popular link between science and marriage in the *Moral Maze* dataset is the repetition of arguments about procreation. The lemma 'procreate' occurs 33

times across *MM1* and *MM2*, with the cluster 'procreation of children' occurring nine times<sup>18</sup>. The repetition of this term, alongside 15 occurrences of 'biology' and 120 occurrences of 'child', highlights the primary argument used by those opposed to same-sex marriage: marriage is where procreation should take place. As procreation is not possible (in the strict biological sense noted above) for same-sex couples, they therefore cannot be married. We thus see the rejection of same-sex marriage based on a supposedly scientific basis, which draws heavily on heteronormative discourses - that couples marry so that they can procreate without sin, and that all couples want to have children. Such arguments run throughout *MM1* and *MM2*, despite mentions of both gay and straight couples using *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) or choosing adoption. Throughout the discussions, then, participants build their argument for or against same-sex marriage by putting forward particular standpoints or views which relate to the morality of same-sex relationships generally and the perceived social and biological need for marriage - this enables those against same-sex marriage to make their stance clear without appearing to be homophobic. In the following section, this is considered in more detail.

## **b. Stance**

As outlined in the analysis so far, we are concerned in this paper to explore the means by which speakers construct an argument for or against same-sex marriage, with particular emphasis on the arguments against. A useful way of thinking about this process is to consider what the speakers are doing as *stance-taking*. We take 'stance' here to mean an evaluation produced through discourse, whereby a speaker takes up 'a position with respect to the form or content of one's utterance' (Jaffe 2009: 3). By considering how speakers take stances, we can see how they build their arguments. By analysing the stances taken by the programmes' participants, we are able to locate key themes which are used in the production of an argument against same-

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<sup>18</sup> When the *Moral Maze* transcripts are compared with the British National Corpus, it is apparent that the term 'procreation' is used in this data with a higher frequency than would be generally expected.

sex marriage.

As mentioned above, both panelists and witnesses are called upon to state briefly their views on same-sex marriage. It is interesting, then, to note that many of the panelists do not use the opportunity to take direct, unambiguous stances; of those against same-sex marriage, only Portillo ('I think that the extension to gays...is unnecessary', *MM1*) and Phillips ('marriage is a unique institution with a unique value to society... [it] consists in the safeguarding of the...next generation [and] can't be applied to others', *MM2*) do this. Of those in favour, only Taylor ('I don't see that institution being damaged by it being opened up to homosexuals', *MM2*) and McElvoy (who states that it would be 'profoundly unfair' to exclude gay people from marriage, *MM1*) take what we might call 'direct' stances - statements which clearly reveal their position on the subject of same-sex marriage.

In contrast to this, the panel member Malik avoids taking clear stances throughout his turns in all three broadcasts, and therefore does not express his opinion particularly clearly. For example, in *MM1* he responds to the request for his stance by asking an open question ('what should [marriage] be like now...?') and, in *MM2*, he makes the neutral observation 'I think marriage is a social institution', despite being given the opportunity to state whether he believed in, or disagreed with, same-sex marriage. Similarly, in *MM1* Longley rallies against the homophobic language used by some in the Catholic church around the time of the broadcast, rather than taking a direct stance which aligns him with or against same-sex marriage itself. Interestingly, in *MM2*, Portillo's stance changes from that of *MM1*, where he was explicitly *against* same-sex marriage, to that of an apparent lack of interest, stating that he does not 'get terribly passionate' about the subject. This shift may be indicative of the changing social and political landscape, as by the time *MM2* was broadcast in 2013, the Government consultation (see Section 2, above) had shown public opinion to be mostly positive or neutral. The use of modality to avoid taking clear stances is also clearly seen in the construction of imaginaries,

which is discussed in the next section.

It is during the witness statements that the most stances are taken in these broadcasts. This is because the witnesses are asked to present and defend their opinion, whereas the panellists rarely have to defend – or even articulate – their own opinions or evaluations. The majority of stances taken by the witnesses against same-sex marriage function to define marriage as a heterosexual union, thus falling back on heteronormative ideologies that men and women are fundamentally different yet matching. In *MM1*, Landrum's stance makes use of the claim that 'marriage is about difference', whilst Ivereigh refers to 'gender complementarity'. In *MM2*, Blond's stances reveal his position very clearly: 'marriage has two primary goods – the generation of children and it magnificently negotiates the sexual difference'. James continues this theme, again focusing on children, by stating that 'marriage is the way of uniting man and woman to have their own children'.

The repeated use of the construction 'marriage+is' enables these speakers to align themselves with heterosexual marriage rather than same-sex marriage; they tend not to begin their utterances with 'I think that...', but instead offer repeated definitions which make their stance clear. Despite being a panellist rather than a witness, Phillips also draws on this particular form of argumentation, claiming that 'marriage as an institution is important to society purely because, I would suggest, of its crucial importance in the safeguarding and upbringing of children'<sup>19</sup> (*MM2*). Similarly, whilst Ivereigh argues that marriage is 'a fundamentally inclusive institution' (*MM1*), Blond argues that it is 'a peculiar heterosexual institution' (*MM2*). The stances taken against same-sex marriage, then, are often achieved by the reinforcement of what marriage is; indeed, in *MM0*, panellist Longley claims that there needs to be a 'precise definition of marriage' because, if there is not, 'anybody [can] come along and (...) hijack it'. In this

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<sup>19</sup> Whilst 'I would suggest' is, in this case, performing a hedging function not unsimilar to that of 'I think', Phillips is still working in absolutes when defining marriage as 'important to society' and again linking it to procreation and child rearing. Hedges, like 'I think' or 'I would suggest' are rare in our data.



moment, it is clear that heterosexual people are not potential referents of 'anybody', making it clear that Longley is positioning gay people, specifically, as potentially hijacking marriage. This construct clearly places same-sex relationships as *other* and *different* to heterosexual ones, thus reproducing heteronormative cultural expectations and reflecting typical stance-work by those against same-sex marriage in the broadcasts.

By looking at stance-taking in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts, an important conclusion may be drawn about the way that an argument against same-sex marriage is constructed. By taking a similar stance repeatedly, speakers can build a contextualised subject position for themselves. In *MM1*, for example, Landrum repeats the stance that marriage is about difference by stating that it is conjugal, for procreation, a social good and natural; in turn, he constructs the subject position of 'a logical person', which indexes rationality and allows him to present himself as reasonable rather than phobic. In doing so, he is also able to avoid taking an explicit stance or overtly stating his position on homosexuality itself; instead, by constantly *defining* marriage in a way which precludes same-sex couples, he can build an argument that marriage simply cannot include two people of the same sex. Such stance-taking enables those against same-sex marriage to avoid taking explicitly homophobic stances, as they position the reasons by which they define marriage as unchangeable and, therefore, as out of their hands.

In contrast to this, stances taken which are in favour of same-sex marriage in the debates tend to be direct; this highlights the fact that tolerance is more socially acceptable in this debate than homophobia, hence the reason that those taking anti-same-sex marriage stances mitigate them. The pro-same-sex marriage stances tend to concern the following themes: same-sex couples should have equal access to marriage, marriage is a social good irrespective of sexuality, and what matters is that two people love each other. However, these stances are typically made in *response* to the constant reproduction of heteronormative marriage discourses put forward by those who reject the argument of equal marriage. For

instance, Janner-Klausner's pro- stances in *MM1* include the argument that 'procreation is only part of marriage – it's good for families to have two people who commit to each other' and the stance that 'marriage equality has nothing to do with incest'. Similarly, Samuels in *MM2* is forced to argue in favour of same-sex marriage by responding to heteronormative discourses concerning marriage and procreation, taking stances such as 'marriage is not the only way to deal with the questions of giving children the upbringing they deserve' and 'there are very many ways to relate to one another and for families to organise themselves in society'. In this sense, all of the pro- stances are taken in response to the anti- stances, whereas the anti-marriage stances seem to hold weight in their own right. This reflects both the set-up of the broadcasts, in that those chosen to represent the opposition to same-sex marriage focus on moral and religious reasons, and also the broader cultural context whereby heteronormative ideologies are so salient that same-sex couples continue to be looked upon as 'other'. In this sense, however, those in favour of same-sex marriage are able to construct a convincing argument, but they are always 'on the back foot' in that they have to work harder to defend their stance, because it is more likely to be seen as radical (whereas those against same-sex marriage have history, tradition and religion on their side).

The nature of the programme, mimicking as it does a legal setting, leads there to be a distinct power disparity between the witnesses and the panel members. This, in turn, leads to an interesting use of stance, whereby those in power (the panel) tactically *attribute* a stance to the witness they are interrogating, rather than simply asking them their opinion or directly evaluating something<sup>20</sup>. An example of this comes from *MM2*, where Portillo attributes a stance to Hunt; she argues that marriage is a good thing, so he claims 'you are saying that the opposites of these things, that non-commitment, sex without love and promiscuous sex are presumably a bad thing'. By imposing a stance upon a witness like this, the panel member gains power over

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<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Coupland and Coupland (2009) find that, in the case of doctors and patients, it tends to be the powerful participant in the interaction (the doctor) who attributes stances to the patient.

them, as they impose upon them a need to respond and, potentially, save face. This has an impact on how speakers respond to particular propositions, as the position that they are put in by those opposing them is usually designed to weaken their argument by disrupting its direction and making them appear to contradict themselves. An example of this appears in *MM1* when McElvoy attributes a stance to Ivereigh: ‘...assuming that you would accept that [same-sex marriage] is a natural desire’. In doing this, McElvoy forces Ivereigh to take a stance for or against the proposition that gay people are as likely as heterosexual people to want to marry, which indirectly indexes broader cultural debates surrounding homosexuality as an inherent condition rather than a lifestyle choice, and stereotypes related to homosexuality and non-monogamy. In this case, Ivereigh acknowledges that ‘gay love is a reality’, seemingly weakening his argument against same-sex marriage, but goes on to return to his central, heteronormative argument that marriage is ‘apt for procreation’. Assigning an explicitly moralistic stance to another person is a useful tactic, it seems, because it allows the person interrogating them to imply their own moral stance without having to explicitly take it themselves.

Although there are moments when a pro-same-sex marriage argument is aired, it is nonetheless the case that stances which oppose same-sex marriage occur more frequently in these broadcasts, because they rely on discourses of logic which are supported by heteronormative ideologies of gender complementarity and procreation. These powerful discourses are positioned in such a way that those taking pro-same-sex marriage stances are forced to respond to and challenge them, leading to their claims for equality being discussed and explored to a lesser degree. In this sense, the evaluations on same-sex marriage - whether for or against - tend to be defined by heteronormative ideologies. A key way that this situation emerges is through the construction of the perceived future threat that same-sex marriage would bring; as discussed in the following section, if one is to argue that same-sex couples should be able to marry, they must first be able to argue against the potentially negative

consequences that this could lead to.

### **c. Imaginaries**

In this part of our analysis, we consider the ways in which the participants of the *Moral Maze* broadcasts construct 'imaginaries' in order to argue that a future where same-sex marriage is legalised would be a troubled one. Imaginaries are discursive structures that represent hypothetical situations or possible worlds unrealised at the level of discourse (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012). Imaginaries differ from 'imagined concepts' in the sense that imagined concepts represent actual states of affairs, while imaginaries do not. In other words, imagined concepts are 'representations of the actual world' [while] 'imaginaries' [are] representations of the non-actual (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 103). Imagined concepts potentially have the performing ability to shape institutional reality, depending on the number of people sharing the purported vision. Imaginaries do not have the same performative power, yet, they can be a very powerful performative *device* as incentives, giving people 'reasons for action' (Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012: 104). An imaginary can also be presented as if it is an imagined concept, as a hypothetical situation can be described as though it were a clear future reality. Whether the imaginary creates or shapes reality depends on whether the vision is supported, and whether those who support it have the power to declare a certain imaginary as a fact and impose their view of what the world is on others. This makes the boundary between 'imaginaries' and 'imagined concepts' fuzzy and complex, simply because reality, and representations of what reality is, are not always clear-cut. If imaginaries are presented as if they are actual representations of reality (imagined concepts), and this vision is supported by a large number of people, then these imaginaries *become* imagined concepts. Thus, although imaginaries do not actually represent a real or future reality, they might convincingly be represented by the speaker as if they do, and are therefore a powerful argumentative device.

Fairclough and Fairclough's (2012) discussion of 'imaginaries' and 'the imagined' is useful, because it allows us to analyse how varying imaginaries of same-sex marriage - a hypothetical situation in the UK at the time of the debate and thus an imaginary - are constructed by different participants in the *Moral Maze*, and how these imaginaries are linked by the participants to other visions of future realities. The *Moral Maze* participants use imaginaries to create desirable or undesirable visions of same-sex marriage and its effects. Landrum, for example, presents a future vision which cannot be verified as an actual future world ('we don't know what [same-sex marriage] would mean socially', *MM1*), but continues his turn by constructing future visions of same-sex marriage as damaging 'legally and culturally' (*MM1*), negatively impacting the education of children (*MM1*), and changing society's view of the family (*MM1*). Landrum also states that he thinks same-sex marriage: 'would undermine religious freedom' because 'no matter what safeguards the government would promise for religious people to have religious marriage if you like, and I do think it would create a sort of premier league and Vauxhall conference tiering of marriage in some way, erm. I just don't think the safeguards will be worth the paper they're written on' (*MM1*, our emphasis). These statements differ in the strength of their modal commitment: the speaker's future vision is illustrated by the use of the modal verb will, which is more definitive than the use of would. The speaker's commitment to the future vision he or she presents is also mitigated, at times, by statements indicating that these are the thought processes of the speaker – such as by using 'I think', or by an acknowledgement of the speaker's lack of knowledge towards the truth of such a vision, such in the case of the use of the phrase 'we don't know' (Landrum, above). Constructions like these allow the speakers to avoid taking clear stances, as discussed above.

Although it is the opponents who most frequently construct future visions of same-sex marriage, proponents also do so. Summerskill, in answer to Portillo's question 'is part of what you're arguing now that you think that if there is gay marriage that will reduce erm homophobia?', (*MM1*), constructs a positive future imaginary of same-sex marriage: 'I think

almost certainly it will increase the level to which people are respected (...) in exactly the same way as everyone else' (MM1). Though the use of the future modal 'will' here was initiated by Portillo's question, in which the modal verb 'will' was used as well, it is also mitigated by Summerskill here as he indicates that these are his own thoughts by stating that he is '*almost* certain'. Although same-sex marriage is not a realised state of affairs, it is also presented as an actual vision by McElvoy, who states that 'same-sex marriage is based on on the same humane desire to be committed to the other person to live in a lovely relationship and to be part of the social fabric which is held together by people behaving responsibly and where possible loyally to each other' (MM1).

In MM2, the discussion revolves around the question of what marriage is in general, instead of what same-sex marriage entails. Future actual or hypothetical visions of what same-sex marriage is are therefore constructed much less frequently. On the basis of participants' definitions of what marriage is, it is implied or made explicit why same-sex couples therefore should or should not be excluded from it. An example comes from witness Phillip Blond, who states that 'marriage is a peculiar heterosexual institution because it does two things that no other institution can do, it deals with male-female relationships, and it deals with the fact that heterosexuals have children and homosexuals do not' (MM2). By definition, Phillip Blond therefore excludes same-sex couples from his vision of marriage. This links back to the observation made earlier in this article that marriage in the Moral Maze debates analysed here is defined as a fundamentally heterosexual union by opponents of same-sex marriage, and this debate thus falls back on heteronormative ideologies.

Imaginarities can also be constructed to put forward moral judgements, by constructing a vision of how the world should be, rather than how it is. Phillip Blond creates several visions like this; for example, he states 'churches should be more radical and offer blessings of civil-partnerships' (MM2). In another interesting example, Blond first expresses a belief 'What I believe is, is that we need universals applying to particular groups', and then continues to

discuss this belief as a future vision: 'What's good for women will be different from what's good for men. There will be a gold standard for the advancement of women, there will be a different gold standard of what men, or children or anybody else needs'. By placing this belief in the future, it is 'further removed' from the actual world and the present state of affairs, and therefore is more difficult to counteract. An example of how morals are used to present a future world that will be dangerous or unknown if same-sex marriage is legalised occurs in *MM1*, whereby Portillo represents opposite-sex marriage as a 'good thing' (*MM1*), and 'the best chance for the stable upbringing for children' (*MM1*). The imaginary of same-sex marriage is therefore implicitly constructed as an undesirable goal by Portillo, and he argues explicitly in the next line that same-sex marriage 'breaks the link of marriage and procreation' (*MM1*).

This vision of what same-sex marriage entails is further developed by Portillo with the construction of two future hypothetical visions which are enabled by the use of modality. These future realities conceptualise the consequences of the break between marriage and procreation by stating that there 'could be unpredictable' and 'possibly risky results' (*MM1*). Portillo presents this possible world as one where other non-normative relationships may prosper if same-sex marriage is legalised; when interrogating Janner-Klausner, a rabbi who supports same-sex marriage, he asks: 'If a brother and sister come to you wanting to be married, a father and a daughter wanting to be married, a threesome wanting to married, do you have any ethical resting place in denying them from marriage?'. As indicated by Janner Klausner's response 'Yes, but I'm asking why you're comparing homosexuality to those', the treating of other types of relationships, as if they are unproblematically analogous to homosexuality is implicitly homophobic; it categorises same-sex relationships as 'other' and as equal to unions such as incest and polygamy which, currently, are more widely perceived as deviant in British society. It is clear, here, that the 'slippery slope' metaphor<sup>21</sup> is indexed by Portillo, here, to put forward a

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<sup>21</sup> Metaphors often co-occur with imaginaries, because they lend themselves particularly well to hypothetical situations. The two terms should not be confused or equated, though: it is possible to have

dangerous possible future world, and thus is a central aspect of his argumentation structure. What this tactic achieves is the argument that granting a social group one particular right will lead to further requests for reforms that will become gradually more 'unreasonable'. Baker (2004) identified a similar approach used in House of Lords debates on proposals to lower the age of consent for gay men. As Baker notes, the very presence of this discourse suggests inequality between gay and straight people in the eyes of the law (Baker 2004: 101).

In *MM1*, David Landrum, director of public policy for the Evangelical Alliance, also invokes the 'slippery slope' metaphor in order to argue that same-sex marriage represents the 'unreasonable' requests that the granting of civil partnerships has led to: 'The slippery slope argument's already been made by dint of the fact that we're here discussing this now, ten years after civil partnerships'. However, the 'slippery slope' argument is made most explicitly by Catholic writer Clifford Longley: 'We were talking just now about the slippery slope argument erm haven't we just been watching a dramatic demonstration of the truth proof of the slippery slope argument in 2004, 2005, 2006 when the civil partnership act was going through Parliament it was said time and time again that this was it this is only this is this is what was demanded there is no following consequential demand for gay marriage' (*MM1*). Here, Longley refers to the 'demands' of gay people, which, as Baker points out in his study of speeches made in the House of Lords regarding law reform for gay men, usually collocates with words which imply a lack of legal right, such as *unlawfully*, *kidnappers* and *ransom* (2004: 101). Same-sex marriage is therefore framed in terms of an unreasonable request, which may therefore lead to other such 'unreasonable demands'.

The 'slippery slope' metaphor forms part of a metaphor complex (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 97) of 'danger metaphors', which includes a 'can of worms' metaphor (*MM1*) and a 'later

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metaphors that do not purport imaginaries, and vice versa.



in the queue' metaphor (*MM1*). A 'slippery slope' can be defined as a proposal or statement that is met with objection because of the possible consequences it might have, not because of the proposal itself *per se*. In this sense, it is a highly effective vehicle for the construction of possible future imaginaries. What 'slippery slope' metaphors have in common, therefore, is the idea that one turn of events will lead inevitably to other events, the latter of which bear negative consequences. An example comes from David Landrum, who characterises the extension of marriage to same-sex couples as opening up 'a whole can of worms' to suggest that it would problematise future educational policy: '[Marriage] would be redefined and we don't know what that would mean socially, but my guess would be it would open up a whole can of worms legally and culturally as to the effect of that in education in how we erm teach our children, and how we view family as well would be, changed (*MM1*).

The 'can of worms' metaphor has a negative semantic prosody, and in general English is often used to indicate that the resulting outcome of a turn of event would be out of control, leading to further chaos. For example, a search for the string 'can of worms' in the BNC showed that out of 33 occurrences, two were literal uses of the phrase, and the remaining 31 (94%) were used in negative evaluations. In *MM1*, Clifford Longley asks Laura Janner-Klausner 'is there another demand, as it were, later in the queue that will come about probably in a couple of years from now?' As with the 'can of worms' metaphor, this 'later in the queue' metaphor is also likely to be interpreted by the listener as connoting negative evaluation, and implies that granting same-sex marriage will inevitably lead to other requests for equal rights reform. In David Landrum's quote above, the events constituting the 'can of worms' are changes to education policy in light of the 'redefinition' of marriage. These arguments are implicitly homophobic because equal rights are being treated by those against anti-same-sex marriage as invalid. These imaginaries are not always represented as hypothetical future visions, instead being constructed as actual and inevitable *dangerous* future events, therefore allowing for a portrayal of same-sex marriage as non-normative. Participants in the *Moral Maze* who use such

slippery slope argumentation first construct same-sex marriage as a circumstantial premise and then present undesirable *possible* consequences of having such a circumstantial premise as the *actual* future visions of what this hypothetical circumstantial premise would lead to.

As shown above, imaginaries can often be hinted at through the use of metaphors. These are used to argue that the more 'rights' gay people are granted, the more they will demand, and that this will also lead to other 'unreasonable demands' from other groups such as the extension of marriage to polygamists. Whilst those who are in favour of marriage reform frame the changes in terms of an 'extension' of marriage, those opposing it refer to a 'rebranding' of marriage. In this way, the participants do not take an explicit stance either for or against same-sex marriage, relying instead on heteronormative ideologies and the circular argument that marriage is the way it is because that is how it has always been. At the time of the *Moral Maze* recordings, same-sex marriage in the UK was not a reality, but it was a challenge to the norm.

This section has discussed imaginaries, and danger metaphors, as part of the argumentation structure of implicit homophobia; we will now focus on the importance of metaphors in their own right.

#### **d. Metaphor**

We have shown so far how the analysis of imaginaries reveals the ideological basis of stances that are taken by participants in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts. We have also shown that metaphor plays an important role in the construction of these imaginaries. Metaphors perform other functions as well in this data, however. In this section, we examine the personification of marriage and the use of metaphors of war to argue for and against same-sex marriage. This requires us to address two broad types of metaphor: 'figurative' metaphor (such as legalising same-sex marriage being a 'slippery slope', discussed above) and 'conceptual' or 'cognitive' metaphor - those which reveal that X is conceptualised in terms of Y (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980:

5). For example, in the statement 'she won the argument', the concept of argumentation is lexicalised in terms of a battle, thus revealing the underlying conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR. This is a well-known construct for conceptualising verbal behaviour (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 15) and, in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts, the same-sex marriage debate is sometimes framed in terms of war. For example, in *MM1*, Ben Summerskill makes the following statement in response to Clifford Longley's line of questioning about the divisive nature of the same-sex marriage debate: 'Well there isn't [a consensus] now but part of that erm distinct and dissonant unpleasantness is being manufactured by people who have a bit of a history of giving a kicking to homosexuals and I have to say I do think this debate – and I don't apply this to you for one instant – I do think this debate would have benefitted from a few more clerics saying what really motivates is I don't like homosexuals very much...rather than dressing stuff up in theological folk as the cloak for that'. Summerskill frames the church's behaviour towards gay people in terms of a physical attack, here, emphasising the *physical* damage caused. He also describes the more explicitly homophobic language used by some clerics as 'poisonous', again metaphorically implying the negative effects of such language that can also be seen as forming part of a war metaphor complex.

Personification, a type of ontological conceptual metaphor, is another rhetorical strategy used by participants to argue for the importance of marriage. In the introduction to the *Moral Maze*, the novel conceptual metaphor MARRIAGE IS A PERSON underpins Buerk's statement that 'the more heterosexuals reject the idea of marriage, the more homosexuals have become, well, wedded to it' (*MM1*). In this case, the choice of verb 'wedded', which is usually only used in relation to people, treats the concept of 'marriage' as a social actor. The effect of personifying marriage in this way may be that it acquires a greater social importance, because society values people more than concepts. This sense of importance is used by advocates on both sides of the argument for different ends: those against the proposals for same-sex marriage personify the

concept of marriage in ways that suggest the importance of keeping marriage as it is currently defined, whilst those in favour of same-sex marriage personify marriage in order to argue that it is not static, and is therefore amenable to change.

In *MM2*, Phillip Blond asserts the need to 'protect' marriage, which, as well as implying that marriage is fragile, also arguably treats marriage as an animate being. Other anti-same-sex marriage commentators also make use of a 'protection' metaphor to argue for upholding the status quo. David Landrum describes the government's proposed changes to the Marriage Bill as 'trying to tinker' with marriage (*MM1*); the choice of verb arguably frames government reform in terms of attempts to 'fix' marriage, given that the word 'tinker' usually collocates with a discourse of mechanics. This reveals a MARRIAGE IS A MACHINE metaphor, in which Landrum treats marriage as a mechanical object. The verb 'tinker' can also index a sense of ineptness, therefore the implication here is that same-sex marriage represents the government as novices who are 'playing' with the very idea of marriage. The idea of 'tinkering' with marriage is also alluded to by Austen Ivereigh from Catholic Voices: 'politicians are overstepping the mark by trying to tinker with this fundamental social good' (*MM1*). It is also interesting that in both cases, the verb 'trying' implies that these attempts have been or will be unsuccessful. Ivereigh also combines the 'tinkering' metaphor with the 'slippery slope' argument discussed above, when he states that 'to tinker [with marriage] would bring such profound consequences, one consequence [being that] there would no longer be a mechanism by which the state could promote that in particular which is best for children for families and for society' (*MM1*). Here the epistemic modal verb 'would' indexes the certainty of a future in which children are raised by same-sex spouses, which is evaluated as negative, given that the adjective 'profound' usually co-occurs with negative circumstances.

Marriage is often treated by participants as a tangible object, both animate and inanimate, which form part of a CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS metaphor complex. This is evident

in the exchange below. The verbs 'touched' and 'held' usually co-occur with animate subjects, but here they are being used in direct relation to marriage:

DL [Marriage is] actually something that shouldn't be, touched by politics beyond it sort of being held in custody, held in eh::

AM aspic

DL aspic by politics, very good, thank you.

Again, personifying and objectifying marriage has the effect of highlighting its importance, therefore implying that to change it has negative effects. In this case, the metaphorical use of 'held in custody' also constitutes a recontextualisation from legal discourse, which may result in the listener accessing schematic associations of the phrase with criminality. Arguably, the consequence of this is that it implies that changes to the status quo are being compared with criminal activity.

Clifford Longley, questioning Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner, uses the idiomatic phrase 'playing fast and loose' which would ordinarily be used with concepts, feelings or emotions. This allows him to imply that the proposals for equal marriage constitute a careless act: 'OK now religions, even liberal ones like yours draw very their very life blood do they not from ancient tradition...isn't it, highly paradoxical therefore to be playing fast and loose with such an ancient tradition as marriage?' Clifford Longley's argument here is that, because marriage is an 'ancient tradition', and religions are founded on ancient traditions, religious marriage should not be tampered with. This 'fast and loose' metaphor forms part of the CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS complex. The listener may well infer from the 'fast and loose' metaphor that marriage is fragile, since things that are ancient are often breakable; the implication is that 'playing fast and loose' will have a negative effect on marriage.

Other arguments from the pro-same-sex marriage side include the metaphor complex MARRIAGE IS A BINDING DEVICE, for example when Malik states: 'Let's pick up this

argument you made that what marriage does is knit together generations' (*MM2*) and the response from McElvoy is 'Well I just start from the idea that marriage is a good thing and it's a spiritual and social glue and to exclude homosexuals from it just strikes me as profoundly unfair and actually rather unchristian' (*MM1*). In both these examples, marriage is defined in terms of a bonding mechanism. This contributes to the participants' pro-argument that marriage is important and therefore both heterosexual and same-sex couples should have access to it. McElvoy's recontextualisation of religious discourse is in response to the religious argument that marriage is a religious institution that can only take place between a man and a woman.

As the discussion above shows, metaphors which personify or otherwise objectify marriage serve to highlight the perceived importance of marriage, which is used to construct arguments for maintaining the (heteronormative) status quo. This type of metaphor seems to be used here because of the context, whereby speakers are not explicitly homophobic; the use of metaphorical language lends itself to a certain distance from overt statements, and we would therefore expect this level of metaphor use where implicit rather than explicit homophobia is the norm. Metaphors which conceptualise marriage as a 'natural' institution are also used to argue for restricting marriage to heterosexual couples on the basis that it lies outside of human interference. Again, we assert that this is implicitly homophobic because it excludes same-sex couples from having equal rights to heterosexual couples.

Metaphors are also used by those in favour of same-sex marriage, however. Indeed, whilst participants against marriage reform use the 'slippery slope' metaphor to warn of the inevitability of further demands for equality, participants in favour of marriage reform make reference to the 'slippery slope' in order to undermine it. In the following example from *MM1*, Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner uses the 'slippery slope' metaphor in opposition to a 'mountain' metaphor, to characterise the two arguments in relation to same-sex marriage: 'I love the image of a slippery slope, 'cause I just I just don't agree with it, I see a mountain that we are walking up, people walking together, walking towards progress'. Both metaphors are underpinned by the

conceptual metaphor CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS OF NATURE. The 'mountain' metaphor is underpinned by the conceptual metaphors EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY and CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS. These metaphors have distinctly different connotations: the notion of a 'slippery slope' usually collocates with negatively evaluated concepts, whereas 'mountain', when used metaphorically, is usually used with reference to obstacles to be overcome (which is therefore intended as a positive achievement). The 'mountain' metaphor may also, of course, indicate a path to enlightenment and, therefore, progress<sup>22</sup>; again, this would allow Janner-Klausner to oppose the pejorative 'slippery slope' with a positive metaphorical construction.

Other same sex marriage supporters use metaphors that are underpinned by the EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Ruth Hunt, director for public affairs for Stonewall, describes the vote passed in the House of Commons as 'the first hurdle', which also treats the campaign for equal rights as a series of obstacles to be overcome; the deictic orientational metaphor 'we're not there yet' conceptualises the legalisation of same-sex marriage as a location (MM2). It also links with the journey to equality metaphor, noted above. Ruth Hunt utilises a PROGRESS IS FORWARD orientational metaphor when she states that 'Civil Partnerships were incredibly important as a step forward', which also forms part of the EQUALITY IS A JOURNEY complex.

In this section we have seen how the personification of marriage is used by both sides of the debate to argue for the importance of marriage, for different ends. Participants in favour of the changes emphasise the binding function of marriage, and the imposition on marriage which a 'restrictive' heterosexual definition of marriage entails; those against assert that 'tinkering' with marriage will have dire consequences. Below, we consider the role that metaphor can play, in combination with recontextualisation, stance and imaginaries, in the production of an argumentation structure which is specific to the *Moral Maze* broadcasts under analysis here.

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<sup>22</sup> Our thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

## 6. Argumentation structure

We have endeavoured to show, throughout the analyses presented so far, that the participants against same-sex marriage in the *Moral Maze* broadcasts rely largely on heteronormative discourses. They position heterosexual marriage as morally, biologically and socially logical and important. In turn, same-sex marriage is positioned as oppositional to this and, therefore, as fundamentally problematic. The varied ways in which these speakers build their argument have been shown in relation to stance, metaphor, imaginaries and recontextualisation; whilst each of these issues have so far been considered in turn, we would like to use this penultimate section to show how these linguistic elements can sometimes combine, leading to an implicitly homophobic argumentation structure. We have considered each of the elements of argumentation structure individually; in this section, we bring them together in our final analysis.

A particularly interesting moment which highlights this well comes from David Landrum, Director of Public Policy for the Evangelical Alliance and member of the campaign group 'Coalition for Marriage', in *MM1*. The stance work of this participant typically focused on defining marriage as fundamentally about gender complementarity. In doing so, Landrum was able to make his own position clear and to build an argument against same-sex marriage. A particularly fruitful way for him to do this was to focus on the biological advantages of male/female relationships; in doing so, he was able to detract from the religious argument, which is simply a matter of faith. In addition to his focus on the biological benefits of marriage, Landrum also recontextualised scientific discourses when defining what he claimed marriage actually is. He personifies marriage as a living organism when he states 'what we're talking about here is changing what marriage is fundamentally. The DNA of marriage will change if these proposals [succeed]'. In using the metaphor of DNA here, Landrum implies that allowing same-sex marriage would change the fundamental structure of marriage as an institution. Specifying its DNA structure alludes to the notion of scientific intervention, which the listener may well



associate in this context with controversial practices such as human or animal cloning, but certainly will be familiar with the notion of DNA as something which is fixed and an essential part of human biology - as human beings, we cannot change our DNA. By imbuing the concept of marriage with its own DNA, Landrum is using metaphor to present it as a fixed object which cannot and should not be altered by humans. This positioning of marriage as an organism with its own DNA gives more weight to Landrum's later argument that politicians should not try to alter the tradition of opposite-sex marriage.

Treating marriage as a living organism allows Landrum to make an analogy between changing the structure of marriage and morally contentious alterations in living beings, such as genetic modification, implying by extension that same-sex marriage is immoral. In turn, this allows him to construct a dangerous imaginary, albeit one which is very certain; there is no scope here to suggest that a change to DNA would be a positive thing. As well as arguing that marriage *will* change, he goes on to suggest that 'it would change all sorts of definitions at the centre of our society' (MM1). As discussed in the section on 'imaginaries', above, constructing a negative future imaginary like this about marriage (when including same-sex marriage) is difficult to argue against because it is further removed from the actual world and present state of affairs. This also again links to the 'slippery slope' metaphor, in this case where one negative imaginary would lead to many more negative imaginaries. There is no option, when employing this metaphor, to argue for a positive outcome. As discussed above, positive outcomes are generally referred to with metaphors related to obstacles or journeys - events where humans can have a level of control over how they proceed - whereas a slippery slope suggests a lack of control, which, in and of itself is negative. It is exactly these kind of negative stance constructions that allow opponents in the Moral Maze debates to construct future visions of same-sex marriage as dangerous and immoral, and thus non-normative. Through the use of recontextualised scientific discourse, metaphor and the construction of an imaginary world, then, Landrum's stance work in this moment once again allows same-sex marriage to be

presented as a threat to society. It clearly positions same-sex relationships as *other* and as inferior to opposite-sex ones. We therefore argue that stances such as this are implicitly homophobic.

## **7. Conclusions**

Throughout this article, we have come to a number of conclusions about the way that implicit homophobia works, both in this context and more generally, and how it can be analysed and countered. We discuss these in turn, below.

### **a) Implicit homophobia in the *Moral Maze***

The repeated taking of stances which position same-sex marriage as threatening, unnatural or illogical allow an anti-same-sex marriage discourse to be produced, which at the same time not characterising the speaker as holding homophobic beliefs. In this sense, because the discourse is recontextualised as scientific and legalistic, none of the face-loss normally associated with openly explicitly homophobic statements is presented. Indeed, explicit homophobia is rejected, for example, in the response to McElvoy's question, about whether there is 'an element of distaste and rejection for the homosexual liaison at the bottom of [the arguments against same-sex marriage?]' (*MM1*). The panelists and witnesses against same-sex marriage do not wish to be portrayed as homophobic, as this would undermine their position in the debate. Instead, the participants present themselves as logical and authoritative, through alluding implicitly rather than explicitly to homophobic beliefs. Those who are arguing for same-sex marriage are put in a reactive position, constantly having to argue against these seemingly objective assertions, and thus always being caught on the backfoot. This homophobia thus has to be interpreted by the listener, rather than simply asserted explicitly by the speaker.

These participants do not present themselves as being homophobic, and therefore save their face, yet they are essentially putting forward the argument that same-sex marriage could

lead to the end of western civilisation. They use imaginaries and danger metaphors to imply that disaster will arise if same sex marriage becomes legal, fundamentally affecting and undermining heterosexual marriage and civilisation as a whole. This demonstrates that they are implicitly drawing on heteronormative ideologies where they position same-sex couples as deviant. Even though it is implicit, therefore, they are putting forward homophobic positions as seemingly 'logical' and 'reasonable' arguments.

#### **b) Implications for the analysis of homophobia**

It is important, when analysing homophobia from a linguistic perspective, to analyse both explicit and implicit homophobia. Implicit homophobia often goes unnoticed or unremarked upon, in much the same way as early debates around sexism were largely focused on explicit, 'overt' sexism. We have shown, for example, that the use of metaphor enables implicit, under-the-radar homophobia whereby speakers do not have to directly or overtly express their beliefs; by presenting marriage as a concrete object, one which cannot be 'tinkered' with, it is possible to convincingly argue that it must not be changed. By using CDA in our approach to the analysis of argumentation structure, it has been possible for us to focus on linguistic elements, such as conceptual metaphor, that might otherwise go unnoticed. Homophobia is clearly far more than the analysis of statements, such as 'I hate gays', and it is well-rooted in this discussion of same-sex relationships and marriage. As it is more difficult to challenge, implicit homophobia is a more robust barrier for equal rights campaigners than explicit homophobia, which is now generally received negatively in wider social discourse.<sup>23</sup>

It is evident from our analysis of same-sex marriage that, in order to challenge the implicitly homophobic arguments against it, it is essential to move beyond the discursive frame

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<sup>23</sup> Our research, in this respect, draws parallels with the conclusions of Leap (2010), Peterson (2010, 2011), Provencher (2010) and Morrish (2010).

of religion. If the argument in favour of same-sex marriage is framed only within religious contexts, we are limited in terms of the range of the arguments that can be used, as we will remain caught up in discussions of the 'natural' and the 'traditional'. There are clearly more ways of talking about same-sex marriage, such as in terms of more general discussions of human rights and freedom around issues of sexuality, and it is noteworthy that these discourses rarely occurred in the broadcasts of the *Moral Maze*.

### **c) Countering homophobic discourses**

In this paper, we have highlighted a number of strategies which we claim are homophobic. However, this is not necessarily to claim that the presence of the strategies is essentially and in itself homophobic; instead, given the particular discursive context (in this case religious, scientific and legalistic recontextualisations), such statements have the potential to serve as, and be understood as, discriminatory. Linguistic features and strategies are multifunctional: a particular metaphor that is used is not homophobic in itself, unless it is used within a particular context. Thus, an analysis which focuses on both the discourse level along with the linguistic level is able to focus on the way that implicit homophobia is about an interplay between contextual features and linguistics items.

We need to ask, however, what use a study like this is to the broader social movement. Academics engaged in work such as this must develop better ways of communicating our findings with a wider public; as Baker (2014: 207) argues, '(t)here is a nice view from the ivory tower, but if we stay there we risk irrelevance'. Throughout this project, we have endeavoured to bring our research to the attention of groups such as the Campaign for Equal Marriage (C4EM), and have summarised our work in progress via our blog. We also hope that our analysis will serve to enable or facilitate other analyses of implicit homophobia. Our analysis has integrated the focus on linguistic and discourse level elements in order to map out the way that homophobic statements are made by speakers, who at the same time position themselves as

neutral and reasonable. Whilst in different contexts implicit homophobia will take different forms, we believe that drawing on elements such as stance, argumentation structure, imaginaries and metaphor may be a starting point for the analysis of implicit homophobia in other contexts across a wider range of texts.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Our focus on same-sex marriage, and its linguistic representation in wider discourse, is an ongoing project with more analyses planned. For more information on the Discourse of Marriage Research Group visit our blog at: <http://discoursesofmarriage.blogspot.co.uk>.

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